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The Ontario Curriculum
Unit Planner

ESL/ELD
Companion
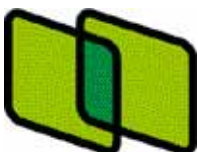
Teacher Companion

ESL/ELD Companion

Contents

Preface

This ESL/ELD Companion is taken from **PART 1. ESL/ELD PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS** of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001* which describes programs and procedures that support students who are from countries or communities in which standard Canadian English is not the primary language of communication and who may have difficulty meeting the expectations of the Ontario curriculum because of their lack of proficiency in English. Teachers should use this resource guide in conjunction with the various curriculum policy documents that make up the Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 8.The guide has been designed to help schools and classroom teachers provide the accommodations and modifications that will enable students from a variety of linguistic, ethnocultural, and educational backgrounds to participate as quickly and as fully as possible in all program areas and to achieve the expectations of the Ontario curriculum. The complete publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca.

Introduction

Students who have immigrated to Canada, students from Canadian communities in which a language other than English is spoken, and students who speak a language other than English at home may come to school with a limited understanding of English. These students are usually proficient users of their own languages but require assistance to learn English, the language of instruction in Ontario schools. English as a second language (ESL) instruction is designed to provide such assistance.

Students who have not developed literacy skills in their first language because of limited access to schooling or who come from communities where standard English is the official language but where other varieties of English are in common use may also require help in developing the English-language proficiency they need to succeed in school. English literacy development (ELD) instruction is designed to help such students to improve their skills in reading, writing, and oral communication in English. [Note: the term *English literacy development* (ELD) replaces the designation *English skills development* (ESD); the ELD designation is now used at both the elementary and secondary levels.]

ESL/ELD students are often unable to demonstrate their true competence in other subjects because they lack the necessary language skills to understand the lessons or produce written or oral work. They need to be given time to develop their skills in English before their achievement can be assessed according to the criteria used for other students. The role of the school is to assist such students in acquiring the English skills they need to participate in learning activities on an equal basis with their peers and to meet the expectations of the Ontario curriculum. *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*describes actions schools can take to support ESL and ELD students.

At the elementary level, ESL/ELD instruction is a support program or intervention rather than a separate curriculum subject. Because students' language proficiency affects their achievement in all subjects, teachers need to incorporate appropriate ESL/ELD approaches and strategies into all areas of the curriculum. Most ESL/ELD students, from early to more advanced stages of English-language acquisition, work in a regular classroom for most of the day, with the support of the classroom teacher and/or, where available, of an ESL/ELD teacher. *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*provides practical strategies and models for integrating language and content instruction for ESL/ELD students in those classrooms.

The Backgrounds of ESL and ELD Students

Some ESL (English as a second language) students who enter Ontario schools have little or no previous knowledge of English but have received educational experiences in their own countries. Others may be Canadian-born students who are from homes and/or communities in which English is not widely used and who therefore have limited proficiency in English.

ELD (English literacy development) students are those who have had limited access to schooling and have significant gaps in their education. They may come from countries in which English is not spoken, or in which standard English is the official language but other varieties of English are in common use. Unlike ESL students, ELD students have not had opportunities to develop age-appropriate literacy skills in their first language.

Factors Influencing Second-Language Acquisition

The rate at which an ESL/ELD student develops proficiency in English, adapts to the new environment, and integrates into the mainstream academic program in an Ontario school will be influenced by the following factors:

- the age of the student on arrival;
- the effects of possible personal trauma caused by natural disaster, political upheaval, war, family disruption, or other difficult circumstances;
- the length of time the student has lived in Canada;
- the student's stage of acculturation or orientation to Canada;
- the student's previous educational experiences;
- the student's level of first-language literacy;
- the student's previous exposure to English;
- the language or languages spoken in the student's home;
- the presence of learning exceptionalities.

Maintenance of the Student's First Language

Research indicates that students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally when they are encouraged to develop and maintain proficiency in their first language while they are learning English. Language skills and conceptual knowledge are readily transferable from one language to another, provided there are no learning exceptionalities. The first language provides a foundation for developing proficiency in additional languages, serves as a basis for emotional development, and provides a vital link with the student's family and cultural background. A strong foundation in the first language can also help students to:

- develop mental flexibility;
- develop problem-solving skills;
- communicate with family members;
- experience a sense of cultural stability and continuity;
- understand cultural and family values;
- develop awareness of global issues;
- expand their career opportunities.

The Acculturation Process

ESL/ELD students come from widely divergent backgrounds. Some come from countries in chaos; some have spent years in refugee camps; some are from areas that possess very little technology; some are from large, industrialized urban centres. Even among students from the same culture, there may be great differences in background and ability. For this reason, it is impossible to generalize about immigrants from a particular country or to predict which immigrant students will adjust most readily to Canadian society. It is acknowledged, however, that all or most newcomers experience a period of cultural adjustment. Four stages have been identified in this period of adjustment: initial enthusiasm, culture shock, recovery, and integration. The characteristics of each stage are outlined below.

Stages in the Acculturation Process

During the first stage, *initial enthusiasm*, newcomers may:

- feel excitement, idealism, and eagerness;
- have some anxiety about the future;
- feel optimistic about the new country and new opportunities.

During the second stage, *culture shock,* newcomers may:

- experience confusion, misunderstandings, and anxiety;
- see themselves as "observers";
- feel depressed and isolated;
- demonstrate withdrawal, alienation, and in some cases, aggressive behaviour;
- avoid contact with the mainstream culture or community.

During the third stage, *recovery,* newcomers may:

- have more constructive attitudes and feel less anxious;
- speak better English and understand more;
- try new behaviours and test limits.

During the fourth stage, *integration,* newcomers may:

- feel that their emotional equilibrium is restored;
- show humour and trust;
- be able to value both old and new cultures.

The rate at which individuals experience the acculturation process may vary even among members of the same family. Some students may experience elements of different stages at the same time; some may remain in one stage for an extended period of time or may repeat characteristics associated with an earlier stage if the process has been interrupted. Students generally find it easier to learn English if they receive support while going through the acculturation process.

Stages of Second-Language Acquisition and Literacy Development for ESL Students

Stages of Second-Language Acquisition for ESL Students

ESL learners move through a series of predictable stages as they progress towards native-like proficiency in English. These stages are part of a continuum of language acquisition and are not tied to one particular grade or subject.

Stage 1: Using English for Survival Purposes

Students at Stage 1 are becoming familiar with the sounds, rhythms, and patterns of English. They try to make sense out of messages, and they show some limited comprehension of "chunks" of language. Their understanding depends on visual aids. They often respond non-verbally or with single words or short phrases.

Stage 2: Using English in Supported and Familiar Activities and Contexts

Students at Stage 2 listen with greater understanding and use everyday expressions independently. They demonstrate growing confidence and use personally relevant language appropriately.

Stage 3: Using English Independently in Most Contexts

Students at Stage 3 speak with less hesitation and demonstrate increasing understanding. They produce longer phrases and sentences. They participate more fully in activities related to

academic content areas. They are able to use newly acquired vocabulary to retell, describe, explain, and compare. They read independently and use writing for a variety of purposes.

Stage 4: Using English With a Proficiency Approaching That of First-Language Speakers

Stage 4 is often the longest in the language-acquisition process. There may be significant differences between the abilities of students at the beginning of the stage and the abilities of students at the end of the stage. Students use a more extensive vocabulary with greater accuracy and correctness. They are able to use reading and writing skills to explore concepts in greater depth, even though their proficiency in language specific to academic program areas is still developing.

Detailed descriptions of the language skills and knowledge that ESL students are likely to have at each of these four stages are provided in the tables in Part 2 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001* (starting on page 28). The descriptors are organized in tables under the following headings: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Orientation. Three sets of tables are provided – for students in Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 6, and Grades 7 and 8.

Stages of Second-Language Acquisition and Literacy Development for ELD Students

Students who have had limited access to schooling and have significant gaps in their education typically progress through four stages of proficiency in their use of standard Canadian English.

Stage 1: Beginning to Use Standard Canadian English Appropriately

Students at Stage 1 can read and comprehend simple written Canadian English. They are beginning to write, using simple structures.

Stage 2: Using Standard Canadian English in Supported and Familiar Activities and Contexts

Students at Stage 2 listen with greater understanding and use everyday expressions independently. They demonstrate growing confidence and use personally relevant language appropriately.

Stage 3: Using Standard Canadian English Accurately and Correctly in Most Contexts

Stage 3 is often the longest in the language-acquisition process. There may be significant differences in the abilities of students at the beginning of this stage and the abilities of students at the end of the stage. Students at Stage 3 use a more extensive vocabulary with greater accuracy. They are also able to use reading and writing skills to explore concepts in greater depth, even though their proficiency in language specific to academic program areas is still developing.

Stage 4: Reading and Writing

Students at Stage 4 demonstrate the skills needed to perform grade-appropriate reading tasks and use the conventions of standard written English appropriately.

Detailed descriptions of the language skills and knowledge that ELD students are likely to have at each of the stages are provided in the tables in Part 2 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001* (starting on page 43). The descriptors are organized in tables under the following headings: Oral Expression and Language Knowledge, Reading, Writing, and Orientation. Three sets of tables are provided – for students in Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 6, and Grades 7 and 8.

Most ELD students will have some oral proficiency in English. Descriptions for listening and speaking (combined under the heading "Oral Expression and Language Knowledge") have therefore been provided in a framework consisting of three stages of development (rather than four). In cases where English is not the student's first language, teachers may need to consider the descriptors for both the ESL stages and the ELD stages. Teachers may focus on the ESL stages for the development of oral proficiency in English while using the ELD stages to address the student's literacy requirements.

Using the Stages of Second-Language Acquisition in Program Planning, Program Development, and Assessment of Student Performance

Three sets of descriptors (for Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 6, and Grades 7 and 8) are provided, in the tables in Part 2 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*, for skills related to listening, speaking, reading, writing, and orientation at each stage of ESL learning. Three sets of descriptors for the different stages of ELD development are also provided, for skills related to oral expression and language knowledge, reading, writing, and orientation. Teachers may use these descriptors as a guide for program planning, program development, and assessment for ESL and ELD students.

Teachers might begin by photocopying the set of tables that applies to the particular ESL or ELD student, taking into consideration the student's age (e.g., selecting the Grade 7 and 8 descriptors for a 12-year-old student). After identifying and highlighting the skills that the student currently demonstrates, teachers will be able to focus on the skills that need to be taught, initially and in subsequent stages. The descriptions for the stage that best reflects the student's demonstrated skills will also help teachers to adapt or modify the student's regular grade expectations appropriately, as illustrated in the sample teaching units provided in Part 3 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*.

It is important to remember that students are moving along a continuum of language learning. The rate at which students move from one stage to the next will vary with the individual student.

In addition, students may demonstrate skills associated with more than one stage at the same time. This reflects a natural progression of second-language acquisition.

The stages of second-language acquisition and literacy development must be understood in the context of the following general information about the progress of ESL/ELD students:

- In the early stages of acculturation and language acquisition, there are periods of rapid growth as well as times when the student may experience a "silent period" or plateau. During such "silent periods", the student is absorbing large amounts of linguistic and cultural information but is not yet ready to produce oral language, especially in front of the class.

- Most ESL/ELD students are able to use English to communicate in social situations and day-to-day classroom interactions within one or two years. However, students may require from *five to seven years* to develop the ability to understand the academic language used in textbooks and to use English to express the increasingly complex and abstract concepts encountered in the higher grades.

Program Delivery

Responsibility for students' language development is shared by the classroom teacher, school staff, and, where available, the ESL/ELD teacher. Volunteers and peers may also be helpful in supporting ESL/ELD students in the classroom. Students will require varying lengths of time and levels of support in ESL/ELD programs to acquire the English-language skills necessary for integration into the mainstream program. Research shows that students acquire language most readily when they are fully involved in all learning activities in the classroom.

To facilitate students' language learning, program planners should ensure that:
- language is used in a natural way, in real and practical contexts;
- classroom activities regularly provide opportunities for listening and speaking;
- learning activities integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- opportunities for acquiring new vocabulary are always available and are related to curriculum areas;
- opportunities for interesting conversation with English-speaking peers are available on a regular basis;
- mistakes are accepted as a part of learning;
- the purpose of various oral communication, reading, and writing tasks is clear to the learner;
- students are given time to process the new language and are not pressured to speak it until they are ready.

Depending on students' individual needs and on local circumstances, one or more of the following program models may be appropriate:

- **Integrated Classroom Programs.** Students are placed in a classroom at the appropriate grade level for their age and receive English-language support, throughout the day and across all subject areas, from the classroom teacher and/or the ESL/ELD teacher.

- **Tutorial Support.** Tutorial support is appropriate for students who are showing progress in the grade-level program but may still require some assistance to reinforce their language and/or cognitive development. For these students, some one-to-one or small-group instruction may be necessary for a short period of time. Such instruction would be provided by the classroom teacher, the ESL/ELD teacher, or other school support staff.

- **Intensive Support.** Intensive support is appropriate for students who are in the early stages of learning English as a second language and/or who have had limited educational opportunities. Students may be withdrawn from the regular classroom program for intensive literacy support. However, at least part of the day should be spent with English-speaking peers in a regular classroom program.

Elements of the different models may be combined to allow an individual student's program to be tailored more closely to his or her specific needs.

The Role of the School: Establishing School-Wide Supports for ESL and ELD Students

It is important for schools to have procedures in place to support and reassure students who are entering unfamiliar surroundings and to promote their smooth and successful integration into the school and the Ontario school system. In addition to setting up procedures for the reception, orientation, assessment, and placement of students, and for monitoring their progress, schools will need to find ways to establish and maintain effective communication with the parents of ESL/ELD students and to promote an inclusive and supportive school environment. [In *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*, the word *parents* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s)]

Schools should also give thought to the needs of students who arrive during the school year and should make special provisions to ensure their effective integration into classes that are already in progress.

Reception and Orientation

Schools should establish regular procedures for receiving new students and assessing their educational and linguistic backgrounds and needs. Reception and orientation procedures that ensure a welcoming atmosphere and provide support to new students and their families are an essential part of the successful integration of new students into the elementary school. During the initial reception phase, school staff should collect background information about the student to assist in initial assessment and placement and should take steps to establish open and positive communication with the home. The assistance of an interpreter should be used, where possible, to facilitate mutual understanding.

To ensure new students' smooth transition to the school, the school principal should identify a school team that will be responsible for the reception of ESL/ELD students and their families. Depending on individual school circumstances, the team may consist of administrators, teachers, and support staff.

The classroom teacher or ESL/ELD teacher should collect initial background information about the student, including personal history, circumstances of immigration, previous educational experience, education plans, and career aspirations. This teacher should also review any educational documents that the student may bring. If documents are not available, the teacher should gather information about previous schooling from the student and the parent, including details of the number of years of schooling completed and any interruptions that may have occurred in the student's education (e.g., in the case of refugees).

A member of the team should be responsible for providing essential orientation information to the student and family. [It is helpful to have this information available in printed form so that newcomers are not overwhelmed by the need to assimilate a great deal of information all at once. It is also helpful to provide this information in the student's first language.] Orientation information should include the following:

- basic information about the school community and the structure of the school day and year;
- the names of the principal, the classroom/subject teachers, and, where available, the ESL/ELD teacher, as well as the school telephone number and the telephone numbers of relevant community organizations and of a bilingual contact person or interpreter;
- a description of support services available from the district school board;
- a description of important school norms and rules, such as those outlined in the Code of Conduct (including the dress code), and information about lunch times and facilities, bus
- schedules, and emergency procedures;
- a description of the Ontario school system;
- information on the role of parents in Ontario schools.

The classroom teacher or ESL/ELD teacher should introduce the new student to classroom partners or student guides, including, if possible, some who speak the newcomer's language and who will help to orient the student to the school and its routines.

Initial Assessment

The purpose of the initial assessment is to obtain further, more detailed information about each student's educational background and experiences and level of proficiency in English in order to provide appropriate programming. This process may include a first-language assessment; an ESL/ELD assessment, guided by the descriptions of skills at the four stages of second-language acquisition provided in Part 2 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*; and a mathematics assessment. The information should be gathered informally over several weeks through observation of students as they participate in reading and writing tasks and mathematics activities, interact with peers, and respond to new tasks and learning situations.

ESL/ELD students arrive with a variety of literacy experiences. Some have well-developed literacy skills in their first language. Others, who may have had limited educational opportunities, may not have developed grade-appropriate literacy skills in their first language. Determining the student's level of literacy in his or her first language will help clarify the level of support the student will require while learning English. The assistance of interpreters or translators and the use of dual-language materials may be helpful, where those services and resources are available. The student's proficiency in using the first language in initial writing tasks can provide information about his or her literacy skills.

Placement

Elementary students should generally be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their age, rather than in a lower grade on the basis of their level of academic functioning. Students' academic and social development is enhanced in an environment where they are able to engage in the learning process with their peers. Information gathered from student records, from parents, and through the initial assessment will help identify what type of ESL/ELD program would be most appropriate for the student. Rates of English-language acquisition vary from student to student. Ongoing monitoring of student progress and a flexible approach are needed to ensure that students' ESL/ELD programs continue to be appropriate for them.

When assessment and monitoring of a student's progress indicate that he or she may be functioning several grades behind his or her peers, teachers should try to obtain more information about the student's educational background, including any experiences of disrupted schooling or limited access to schooling in the country of origin. With focused literacy instruction, the student can probably make steady gains towards catching up with peers. Even so, some students – about the same proportion as in the general school population – may have learning difficulties that are not related to a lack of knowledge of English or to gaps in their schooling. Measures to accommodate these students are discussed under "Further Considerations", in the section on exceptional students.

Monitoring

Each student's academic progress and social integration should be carefully monitored by the classroom teacher and, where available, the ESL/ELD teacher. While the initial assessment may provide sufficient information for tentative programming, it is important to assess each student's progress on an ongoing basis. Teachers should keep track of the student's academic and linguistic development and progress in second-language acquisition and should suggest and make changes to a student's program and provide additional supports as needed.

A student may appear to be completely integrated into the mainstream program within two or three years. However, the student's progress should continue to be monitored until he or she has demonstrated a level of proficiency in English skills similar to that of his or her English-speaking peers.

Communicating Effectively With Parents of ESL/ELD Students

The school should establish procedures for helping the parents of new students become oriented to the school and the school system. Where possible, interpreters and translated material should be used to facilitate home–school communication. The school should attempt to recruit other families in the community who speak the newcomers' language to "partner" and support the newcomers for a period of time.

Promoting an Inclusive and Supportive School Environment

All school staff members should work towards creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for ESL/ELD students. School administrators can help to create such an atmosphere by implementing some of the following suggestions:

- post visual images that represent all students in the school;
- provide signs, notices, and announcements in the languages of the school community;
- honour the various cultural and faith celebrations within the school;
- encourage and recruit bilingual volunteers;
- have staff who provide ESL/ELD support collaborate in program planning;
- promote professional development opportunities for ESL/ELD staff and classroom teachers;
- take ESL/ELD considerations into account when creating timetables;
- include time for ESL/ELD progress reports in the agenda for staff meetings;
- make resources for effective implementation of ESL/ELD programs accessible to staff;
- allocate budget funds for the purchase of inclusive curriculum resources;
- consult regularly with board and community resource personnel about additional ways to support and strengthen ESL/ELD programs.

The Role of the Classroom Teacher and the ESL/ELD Teacher

In elementary schools, most students who require ESL/ELD support participate in the regular classroom program for most of the school day. All teachers, therefore, need to work together to:

- identify students who will need ESL/ELD support and plan and implement programs for them;
- incorporate appropriate ESL/ELD approaches and strategies into the regular instructional program;
- provide ongoing assessment and evaluation of students' acquisition of English and report on student progress;
- implement board procedures related to the referral process for ESL/ELD students, in collaboration with school staff and parents;

- collaborate with relevant school staff to find ways to use and adapt resource materials for ESL/ELD students;
- initiate and/or participate in school-level case conferences and parent meetings as required.

Teaching Strategies

a) Strategies for Supporting the Newly Arrived ESL/ELD Student

Providing a warm and welcoming environment for the ESL/ELD student from the start will facilitate a smooth transition into the new school and classroom and will have a positive impact on the newcomer's confidence, motivation, social adjustment, desire to learn, and even his or her health and attendance. Strategies that teachers can use to help students through the initial adjustment period include the following:

- Practise and use the correct pronunciation of the student's name.
- Seat the student where she or he can see and hear all classroom activities and near classmates who will provide support and language models.
- Introduce yourself and the students who sit nearby. Write your name in the student's notebook for his or her reference.
- Assign a classroom partner (if possible, of the same gender and with the same language background) to assist the student in adjusting to the school and class. Write this name in the student's notebook, as well.
- After the student has had an opportunity to make an initial adjustment to your classroom, arrange for a school tour.
- Ensure that the student is aware of school hours and can find the washroom, lunch room, gym, and other key locations in the school and knows the routines and schedules for their use.
- Teach the student key "survival" phrases such as: *"Where is…?", "May I …?", "I don't understand", "Hello", "Good morning", "Goodbye"*.
- Teach the student the English for important personal information (address, phone).
- Be sure the student knows how to get home safely at the end of the day.
- To help with socialization, give the newcomer classroom jobs such as distributing or collecting classroom materials, going on errands with a partner, and being a classroom helper.
- Develop a "Welcome Book", with an accompanying audiotape, for the student. The book might contain basic school vocabulary, greetings, the alphabet, staff names and pictures, and room locations and names. The student may then read the book and listen to the tape simultaneously, at leisure. Where possible, the book should include reminders/translations in the student's first language.
- To help students learn new English vocabulary, provide a bilingual and/or picture dictionary, picture cards, and a notebook or scrapbook in which the student can begin creating a personal dictionary.
- Gather language-learning materials that the student can use independently or with a buddy. Such materials could include the following:
    - picture books with accompanying tapes

- – dual-language books
- – mathematical activities
- – interactive CD-ROMs
- – games such as Concentration, Boggle, Scrabble, word searches, puzzles
- – taped music, songs, chants, rhymes (with accompanying written text, if possible)
- – illustrated print material that relates to the content areas being studied and has controlled vocabulary and sentence structure
- Use themes such as the following for vocabulary development, as appropriate to the grade level:
  - – colours
  - – clothing
  - – family
  - – classroom
  - – home
  - – neighbourhood
  - – school
  - – food
  - – senses
  - – feelings
  - – weather
  - – seasons
  - – animals/plants
  - – sports/recreation
  - – Ontario
  - – Canada
- Encourage the student to use the first language in journals, personal dictionaries, word lists, prewriting activities, and oral discussions, and for making notes and visual organizers and preparing outlines or drafts. Use of the first language as a tool for learning and thinking helps the student develop a strong foundation of knowledge and skills upon which English proficiency can be built.

b) Strategies for Ongoing Classroom Use With ESL/ELD Students

- **Design lessons and activities and choose resources that recognize students' background knowledge and experiences.** Encouraging students to share information with one another about their own languages and cultures strengthens all students' awareness of language and culture and helps to give them a sense of belonging and of being respected.

- **Use subject content as a vehicle for English-language instruction.** Providing students with opportunities to acquire language in a context that is interesting and relevant will assist the language-learning process. As well, students need to begin as soon as possible to use the language of instruction to acquire important concepts and skills in the various subject areas of the curriculum and to develop higher-level thinking skills (e.g., problem solving, inferring, analysing, synthesizing, and predicting).

- **Adapt programs to allow students in the early stages of learning English and/or at early stages of development in English literacy to be successful.** Appropriate adaptations include the following:

    – modifying some or all of the subject expectations;
    – adapting instructional strategies to include simplified vocabulary and increased use of
    – visual cues, graphic organizers, and peer tutoring;
    – using students' first languages at strategic times;
    – using a variety of learning resources, including visual materials, simplified texts, and bilingual and picture dictionaries;
    – modifying assessment strategies (e.g., by providing extra time, using conferencing, and having students complete graphic organizers and cloze activities for assessment tasks that depend heavily on proficiency in written English).

- **Highlight the different ways in which language is used in various subject areas.** All students, but especially ESL/ELD students, need to acquire the specialized vocabulary and language skills appropriate to each discipline. For example, in science and technology, students need practice in using the passive voice to write reports or describe processes. In mathematics, students need to understand and use expressions for comparing quantity, speed, and size, as well as words and phrases related to mathematical operations, in order to communicate knowledge related to concepts, procedures, and problem solving. In history and social studies, students need to become familiar with a wide range of tenses, words, and phrases that indicate chronological and/or cause-and-effect relationships among ideas and events.

- **Work collaboratively with all teachers of ESL/ELD students.** Share information with other teachers about the student's classroom behaviours, academic progress, and willingness to participate in a variety of classroom activities and groupings. Share tips about effective ways of helping the student become familiar with the vocabulary and concepts of particular subject areas.

c) Strategies for Integrating ESL/ELD Students Into the Academic and Social Environment of the Classroom [The material in this section is adapted from "Supporting ESL/ELD Learners in the Classroom", in *Multilingual Education in North York Schools* (pp. 8–9), © 1998 by the former North York Board of Education. The material is used with the permission of the Toronto District School Board.]

It is important for teachers to identify language that may be confusing to ESL/ELD students and to substitute clearer alternatives. Students learn language best when they can understand what is said by inference: that is, by making connections to what they already know. To help students do this, teachers can use the following techniques:

- **Simplify vocabulary.** Choose simple, straightforward words that are in everyday use. For example, most students will understand "*Learn the new words*" more easily than "*Review the new vocabulary*".

- **Recycle new words.** Reintroduce new words in a different context or use recently learned words to introduce or expand a concept.

- **Simplify sentence structure.** Avoid complex sentences and passive verbs if possible. For example, instead of "*The homework must be completed and handed in by Friday*", it would be better to say "*You must finish the work and give it to me on Friday*".

- **Highlight key ideas and instructions.** Pause to get students' attention before making an important point and make sure all students can see you. Use gestures for emphasis; raise pitch and volume slightly; repeat or rephrase, or ask a student to do so. Review instructions and concepts periodically with the class to reinforce students' comprehension.

- **Provide notes** that highlight key ideas and new words**.** Use the chalkboard or post a chart in the classroom for ongoing reference. Provide a summary sheet so that students can refer to it when studying at home.

- **Give clear instructions.** Number and label the steps in an activity. Reinforce oral instructions for homework and projects with a written outline to help students who may not be able to process oral instruction quickly enough to understand fully.

- **Use many non-verbal cues.** Gestures, facial expressions, and mime will help learners grasp the meaning of what you are saying. Be aware, however, that some gestures (e.g., pointing at people) may have negative meanings in some cultures.

- **Make frequent use of a variety of concrete and visual supports.** These might include models, toys, math manipulatives, pictures, charts, flashcards, vocabulary lists, key visuals, posters, and banners. Demonstrate procedures and provide related hands-on activities.

- **Allow sufficient response time** when interacting orally with ESL/ELD learners. Students need time to think in the first language and compose a response in the second.

- **Check often for comprehension.** For example, at frequent intervals say, "*Tell me what you have to do next*".

- **Provide bilingual support.** For students who are in the early stages of learning English, bilingual peers can clarify instruction, provide translations of key words that are difficult to explain in English, and help you to determine whether a student understands.

- **Speak naturally** and only slightly more slowly than for native speakers of English. ESL/ELD learners have to learn to recognize English as it is actually spoken. It may be necessary to explain contractions such as "don't" and non-standard spoken forms such as "gonna".

- **Use key visuals.** Key visuals are teacher-developed graphic organizers that show how ideas are related. T-charts, Venn diagrams, flow charts, story maps, time lines, and decision trees are examples of organizers that are not dependent on language knowledge and that promote the development of thinking skills such as classifying, relating cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, or following a sequence.

- **Be aware of figurative language.** For example, saying "*Run that by me again*" or "*Now we're cookin'*!" may confuse second-language learners. Avoid using slang and unusual idioms with beginning ESL/ELD learners. With students who have progressed beyond the beginning stage, develop techniques for explaining the use of non-literal expressions: for example, post a list of the week's idioms on a bulletin board.

The Role of Parents

As with students who speak fluent English, ESL/ELD students perform better in school if their parents are involved in their education. Teachers need to encourage the parents of an ESL/ELD student to support their child and let the parents know how they can help him or her at home.

Parents do not need to be proficient in English in order to help their child. For example, when parents continue to support the development of the first language, the child's underlying knowledge, conceptual base, and language ability are improved. This cognitive and linguistic knowledge is transferable and helps the student while learning English.

Parents should be encouraged to use their first language at home with their child to:

- discuss books;
- talk and share family experiences;
- review school work;
- write to family members;
- read.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

Assessment

Assessment and evaluation of ESL/ELD students should:

- focus on improving student learning;
- be linked directly to curriculum expectations (as modified for each student's ESL/ELD stage of development);
- recognize linguistic and academic progress while taking into account realistic and varying rates of second-language learning;
- incorporate student self-assessment;
- actively involve students and parents.

To determine if their assessment procedures for ESL/ELD students are appropriate, teachers should consider the following questions:

- Do assessments reflect appropriate program adaptations?

- Are assessments based on clear statements of expectations?
- Do assessments take into account the student's developing understanding of English?
- Do assessments take into account the cultural and linguistic background of the student?
- Do assessments allow for the use of the student's first language as appropriate?
- Do assessments include clear guidelines for program monitoring?

Because language learning is developmental and involves experiment and approximation, the educational strengths and needs of the ESL/ELD student can be identified most effectively through the use of a variety of assessment tools. Teachers should provide students with a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. Teachers can base assessments on tests and anecdotal records, on the results of student work (such as portfolios, journals, learning logs, and oral reports/presentations), and on observation of the student during a variety of classroom-based instructional activities such as the following:

- cloze activities
- retellings
- role-plays or simulations
- demonstrations/experiments
- discussion groups
- conferences
- interviews
- peer- and self-assessment activities
- peer teaching (students teach a skill or idea to one another)

Evaluation

Teachers should adjust their expectations according to the length of time students have been in Canada, their previous educational and social experiences, and the amount of cultural adjustment required. Evaluation procedures should be clear and purposeful and should distinguish between ESL/ELD needs and program content needs. The descriptions provided in the tables in Part 2 of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Resource Guide for English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2001*, will be helpful in measuring student progress in language acquisition and, by extension, may also be useful for measuring student achievement of curriculum expectations.

Reporting to Parents of ESL/ELD Students

Teachers should communicate with parents about their child's progress throughout the year. In addition to the report card, teachers can use parent–student–teacher conferences (including discussion of samples of student work), interviews, phone calls, and informal reports to keep parents informed about their child's learning. Where possible, it would be helpful to use the services of an interpreter to ensure that all information is conveyed clearly and understood completely, and to enable parents to ask questions.

Completing the Provincial Report Card

The ESL box that appears in the subject field on the report card should be checked for any student receiving ESL support in any subject area, whether from an ESL or ELD teacher, classroom teacher, or other school staff.

The "ESD" box should be checked for all students receiving ELD support in any subject

area, whether from an ESL or ELD teacher, classroom teacher, or other school staff. [English literacy development (ELD) was formerly referred to as "English skills development" or "ESD". The box for ELD on the report card may still be identified as "ESD".]

> *Checking the ESL or ESD box indicates that accommodations and/or modifications of curriculum expectations are in place for that student.*

If the curriculum expectations for the ESL/ELD student have been modified, then the student's mark or grade reflects the student's level of achievement in the modified program. In such cases, the following statement must be included in the "comments" section:

> *The (grade/mark) for (strand/subject) is based on achievement of the expectations in the (ESL or ELD) program, which vary from the Grade __ expectations.* [Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1–8* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1998), p. 8.]

When an ESL/ELD student also has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the following statement should be used instead of the ESL or ELD statement*: "The (grade/mark) for (strand/subject) is based on the achievement of the expectations in the IEP, which vary from the Grade __ expectations."* [Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1– 8* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1998), p. 8.] The mark assigned is based on the expectations outlined in the IEP. ESL/ELD needs should be considered when the expectations in the IEP are being determined. An ESL or ELD student who has an IEP and whose program has been aligned with his or her stage of development in ESL or ELD should therefore rarely receive an "R" (indicating that remediation is required).

ESL/ELD students should be given time to develop their skills in English before their achievement is assessed by the criteria used for other students. In some cases, it may be appropriate to avoid giving a mark in a particular subject, or even in all subjects, on the report card. For example, it may not be possible to provide a fair evaluation of performance for students who have arrived very recently or who have missed so much schooling that few of the program expectations can be evaluated. In such a case, teachers should use the space on the report card to make clear that insufficient evidence of achievement is available at that time and to write anecdotal comments about the student's progress.

It is important to ensure that parents of ESL and ELD students understand on what basis a particular mark has been given and how it relates both to the student's ability to use English and to his or her proficiency in the subject area.

Further Considerations

ESL/ELD Students in the Kindergarten Program

ESL/ELD children at the Kindergarten level exhibit a variety of responses and behaviours as they learn a new language and adjust to a new social environment. Initially, some Kindergarten children who are learning English as a second language may go through a "silent period", during which they prefer to observe things around them without comment. They may choose not to talk until they can make sense of the new language through careful listening to the teacher and to peers in the classroom and on the playground. Or they may talk to others in their first language, unaware that the listener does not understand them. This often occurs during parallel play. During this phase, students may use body language rather than speech to communicate until they have absorbed enough of the new language to feel confident in their interpretations of what is said and in their ability to provide appropriate responses. When they do choose to talk, some may begin by using a single word or phrase to represent a thought, while others may be surprisingly fluent.

Second-language learners in Kindergarten are still in the process of acquiring their first language. Most acquire the surface features of English quickly, using what they already know about learning and using a language. There is a strong likelihood that their first-language development will be delayed or even regress, with negative consequences not only for family communication but also for academic and social success. These students need consistent and attentive support from both the teacher and the parent to ensure successful development of both English and the home language.

Kindergarten teachers can play an important role by modelling the use of simple, concrete language for second-language learners. To ensure that students understand what is being taught, teachers can use pictures, gestures, and vocal intonation and volume. Second-language learners should have opportunities to practise saying words and phrases through choral activities in the classroom using pattern books, chants, rhymes, and songs. Above all, Kindergarten ESL/ELD students need to be engaged in play. A pleasant, non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom encourages children learning a new language to listen and allows them to feel confident enough to respond orally.

ESL/ELD Students and the Secondary School Curriculum

In Ontario elementary schools, various models for ESL/ELD program delivery may be in place. Many students in Grade 8 are still learning English, even though they may no longer be receiving ESL or ELD support. Once in secondary school, these students may still need ESL or ELD support to help them cope with the linguistic demands of the secondary school program. It may be appropriate to enrol these students in an ESL or ELD course in place of a Grade 9 English course, as well as in special courses or sections of other subjects developed for ESL/ELD learners. (See *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: English As a Second Language and*

English Literacy Development, 1999). Communication between the elementary and secondary school about the academic achievement of Grade 8 students is an essential first step in planning an appropriate secondary school course of study. It may be necessary to reassess students' English proficiency and ESL/ELD needs at this time.

ESL/ELD Students in the French As a Second Language Program

It is expected that ESL/ELD students will participate in the French as a second language (FSL) program along with their grade-level peers. Core French curriculum expectations may need to be modified according to the age, ability, and/or background of individual students.

ESL or ELD Students Who Are Exceptional

When planning ESL or ELD programs, it is necessary to take into account the needs of exceptional students as set out in their Individual Education Plan. ESL and ELD students show the full range of learning exceptionalities in the same proportions as do other Ontario students. Some are gifted, demonstrating special aptitude for learning. Some students arrive with already identified special learning needs, while the needs of others are identified when their progress in English-language acquisition and cultural adjustment differs significantly from that of students from similar backgrounds and with similar educational experiences. (In some countries, assessment procedures and programs for exceptional students would not have been available.) In identifying ESL/ELD exceptional students, it is not recommended that schools wait until students have "learned English" before they are assessed for learning exceptionalities. A delay in addressing a possible exceptionality can greatly delay the student's mastery of English, in addition to working to the student's detriment in other respects.

Like other students with special needs, ESL/ELD students who have special needs are identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) of the board. Assessment of all students for programming and identification purposes must be culturally and linguistically appropriate. Assessors should use more than one instrument or set of instruments in considering the learning characteristics and describing the performance of ESL/ELD students. Students should not be assessed as learning disabled on the basis of performance or behaviours that reflect a normal process of second-language acquisition or a lack of prior opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills being tested.

Teachers must be especially cautious when assessing ESL/ELD students only in English. A student's difficulty in completing a task or following directions may reflect his or her stage of English-language acquisition rather than an inability to perform the task.

ESL/ELD Students and Technology in the Curriculum

All ESL/ELD students should have opportunities to develop competence in using computers and other technologies. Many ESL/ELD students bring with them a wide range of technological experience, but some have had no previous access to computers or other technologies. These students should be taught how to use word-processing programs for school writing projects and should receive help in developing Internet skills. All areas of a student's English-language development can be enhanced through the use of interactive software programs (such as word-processing programs with capabilities for checking grammar and spelling, graphics programs, desktop publishing simulations, and interactive problem-solving games).